

**FIRST RECORD OF ELSMAN'S WHIPNOSE ANGLERFISH, *GIGANTACTIS ELSMANI* (LOPHIFORMES: GIGANTACTINIDAE), FROM AUSTRALIAN WATERS.** *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 46(2): 646, 2001 - Elsmann's Whipnose Anglerfish *Gigantactis elsmanni* Bertelsen, Pietsch & Lavenberg (1981), is a meso- and bathypelagic species previously known from five specimens. The 384mm SL holotype (ISH 1360/71) was trawled in the central Atlantic and the 283mm SL paratype (LACM 10687-1) was caught in the eastern South Pacific. Other specimens have been recorded from Japan (Amaoka, 1984), the Sea of Okhotsk (Fedorov, 1994), and one specimen tentatively identified as this species from the South Atlantic (Bertelsen, Pietsch & Lavenberg, 1981).

*Gigantactis* contains 21 species (Bertelsen, Pietsch & Lavenberg, 1981), and these show extreme sexual dimorphism. The females have an elongate body, head length less than 35% SL, caudal peduncle length greater than 20% SL, and a very long illicium, greater than half the SL. The largest female grows to 40cm, whereas the largest male is only 2.2cm long. Males have highly developed sense organs that are presumably used to find females. Dermal denticles on the snout allow the male to attach to the female. Unlike some other ceratioid anglerfishes, male/female attachment in whipnose anglerfishes is not parasitic (Pietsch, 1999).

A 310mm SL female *G. elsmanni* (AMS L28742-001) was collected by Australian Museum staff on the HMAS Cook in 1989 in the Tasman Sea off Sydney, NSW (trawl start and finish coordinates; 33°52'30"S 152°39'00"E to 33°53'09"S 152°05'54"E). The specimen was collected by midwater trawl at a depth between the surface and 1800m over a bottom depth from 1700m to 4856m, and is a new record for both Australia and the SW Pacific. This is the second species of *Gigantactis* recorded from Australian waters, the first being *G. paxtoni* (Bertelsen & Pietsch, 1983).

The AMS specimen of *G. elsmanni* was fixed in formalin in 1989 and has been preserved since in 70% ethanol. The specimen has the following characters which, in combination, diagnose the species: illicial length 315mm (102% SL); esca papillae absent; dentary teeth relatively short, 9.0mm (longest 2.9% SL) in approximately 5 rows; longest caudal fin ray 90mm (29.0% SL). These characters are in agreement with the original description of the species, with the minor exception that the length of the longest dentary tooth is 2.8 vs. 2.9% SL. The characters of the esca also agree with the original description.

With specimens previously collected from the Atlantic, SE Pacific and Japan it was not surprising that this species was found in Australian waters. The known distribution of this species is here extended into the SW Pacific, increasing the likelihood that its distribution is circumglobal.

#### Acknowledgements

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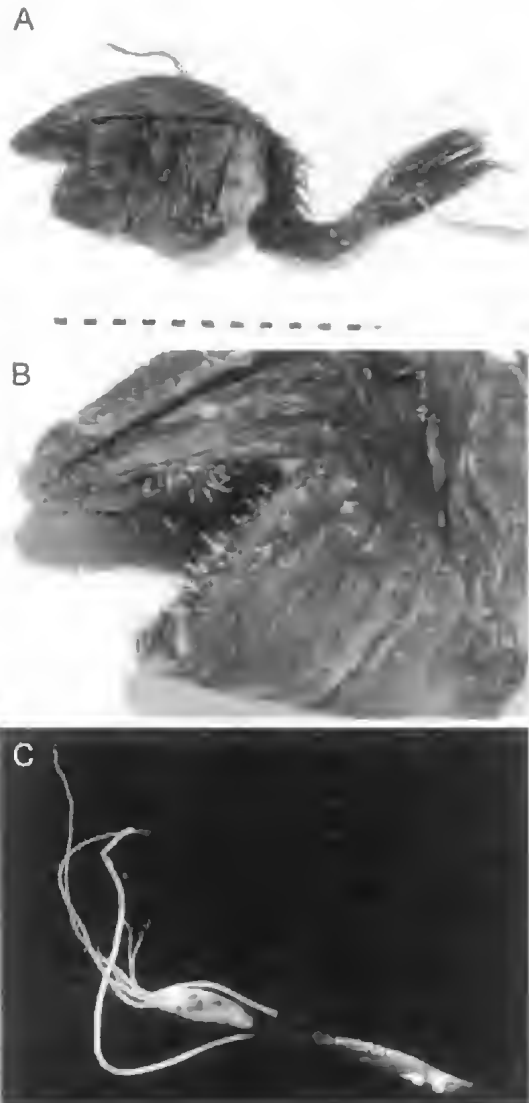


FIG. 1. A, 310mm SL female *G. elsmanni* (AMS L28742-001) collected in the Tasman Sea off Sydney, NSW; B, head (note the origin of the illicium at the tip of the snout); C, esca.

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